

Message Text

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FROM HUMMON TO BOWDEN. PASS NSF.

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: USSAEC, TPHY, OSCI, TGEN, SA

SUBJECT: SANCST

REF (A) DEVEY TELEX TO KLETTE OF AUG 12, (B) STATE 201964

FOLLOWING MESSAGE DELAYED IN TRANSMISSION.

1. IN VIEW OF REFTELS, BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT THAT I GIVE YOU AND NSF A STATUS REPORT ON SANCST AS I HAVE BEEN ABLE TO UNDERSTAND SITUATION SINCE ARRIVING IN RIYADH. GIVEN THE CONSIDERABLE INTEREST IN AND ENTHUSIASM FOR SANCST EXHIBITED BY NSF STAFF DURING MY BRIEFINGS, I AM AWARE THAT NSF IS EXTREMELY WELL ORGANIZED TO BEGIN ACTIVITIES AND DISAPPOINTED THAT THE PROJECT APPEARS TO BE LANGUISHING. USREP SHARES THE DISAPPOINTMENT THAT WE HAVE NOT BEEN ABLE TO MOVE FASTER, AND WANTS TO ASSURE YOU AND NSF THAT WE CONSIDER THIS A PRIORITY ACTIVITY AND WILL DO ALL WE CAN TO SUPPORT GETTING THE PROGRAM UNDERWAY AND IN KEEPING THEMOMENTUM ONCE STARTED.

2. UNFORTUNATELY, DR. OBAID HAS NOT BEEN IN THE COUNTRY SINCE I ARRIVED AND IS NOT DUE TO RETURN UNTIL SEPTEMBER. IN EARLY SESSIONS I HAVE HAD WITH DR. AL-TURKI, HE HAS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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SHIED AWAY FROM DISCUSSING THE SANCST SAYING THAT

SUBSTANTIVE ASPECTS OF THIS OR ANY INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITIES IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY SHOULD BE COVERED WITH DR. OBAID WHEN THE LATTER RETURNS. HOWEVER, I RAISED THE SUBJECT AGAIN WITH DR. AL-TURKI AFTER RECEIPT OF REF A. I COVERED IN SOME DETAIL THE INTEREST IN NSF AND TREASURY IN THIS ACTIVITY AND NOTED THAT WE HOPE TO BE ABLE PROVIDE SUPPORT TO SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME. I SPECIFICALLY ASKED HIM WHEN AND IF HE THOUGHT SANCST WOULD BEGIN. HE MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS:

A. AL-TURKI GREATLY APPRECIATES THE INTEREST OF NSF IN THIS PROJECT. HE SAYS SANCST WILL BE UNDER THE FINANCE MINISTRY. FUNDS HAVE BEEN APPROPRIATED BY THE MINISTRY FOR THE PROGRAM AND THE SANCST PROPOSAL HAS BEEN SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL OF MINISTRIES. CONSIDERATION HAS BEEN DELAYED UNTIL A SESSION IN WHICH ALL THE MINISTERS ARE PRESENT, AND PARTICULARLY THE MINISTER OF FINANCE WHO WILL CARRY MAIN ARGUMENTATION FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SANCST. (I AM SURE THERE ARE ADDITIONAL REASONS FOR DELAY, E.G. RELATIONSHIPS WITH UNIVERSITIES AND CONFLICT AMONG MINISTRIES ON WHO WILL HAVE JURISDICTION OVER SANCST.) ASSUMING FAVORABLE CONSIDERATION BY COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, SANCST WILL THEN BE RECOMMENDED FOR ESTABLISHMENT UNDER A ROYAL DECREE. AL-TURKI SAID HE IS "100 PERCENT CERTAIN" THAT SANCST WILL BE CREATED AND HE ALSO REAFFIRMED WHAT HE TOLD ME EARLIER THAT DR. OBAID WILL BE DESIGNATED AS SANCST COORDINATOR. HE BELIEVES THAT SANCST WILL BE ESTABLISHED IN THE NEXT 2-3 MONTHS. I SAID I UNDERSTOOD THERE WAS ONE QUESTION WHETHER DR. OBAID WOULD GO TO WASHINGTON IN OCTOBER. (OBAPD HAD SENT MESSAGE TO KLETTE THAT HE DID NOT WISH TO GO TO WASHINGTON IN AUGUST SINCE HE HAD NOT YET BEEN DESIGNATED COORDINATOR.) IT SEEMED VERY IMPORTANT TO US THAT HE HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY. DR. AL-TURKI SAID THAT HE AND DR. OBAID WOULD GO TO KOREA TO VISIT KIST, AND EVEN IF OBAID HAS NOT YET BEEN DESIGNATED AS COORDINATOR, OBAID WOULD PROCEED FROM KOREA TO WASHINGTON.

B. DR. AL-TURKI MADE IT CLEAR THAT HIS MINISTRY IS VERY MUCH INTERESTED IN HAVING SANCST ESTABLISHED. HE, LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HOWEVER, STILL WISHES DEFER SUBSTANTIVE DISCUSSIONS UNTIL DR. OBAID RETURNS. AS FOR CONFERENCE IN MOROCCO, HE DID NOT APPEAR TO KNOW MUCH ABOUT IT AND SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHO HIS GOVERNMENT WAS SENDING. (WE UNDERSTAND REPRESENTATIVE IS FROM MINISTRY OF EDUCATION. LATER, AL-TURKI ALSO SAID HIS COUSIN IN CAIRO MAY ATTEND.)

3. MY RELUCTANCE TO RELEASE WAS KLETTE BASED ON (A) THE FACT THAT THERE IS LITTLE TO DISCUSS ON SANCST AT THIS TIME AND LITTLE HAS HAPPENED TO PUT INTO ANY SIX MONTH REPORT AS REQUESTED REF A; (B) WE DO NOT WISH TO GIVE THE IMPRESSION WE ARE PUSHING HARDER THAN SAG ON SANCST; (C) WORKLOAD AT USREP AT PRESENT IS HEAVY. HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF REF B, KLETTE PROCEEDING RABAT VIA CAIRO.

4. I BELIEVE AL-TURKI IS SINCERE WHEN HE INDICATES HIS EXPECTATION THAT SANCST WILL MATERIALIZE SOON. I ALSO BELIEVE THAT HE IS PERSONALLY VERY INTERESTED IN HAVING NSF INVOLVED IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN SAUDI ARABIA. AFTER I HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO MEET OBAID AND OTHERS, HOPEFULLY WILL HAVE FIRMER VIEW ON SANCST PROSPECTS. PORTER

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